



## **4 Ways to Protect Yourself When You Need Auto Repairs**

Many of us feel that we're at the mercy of the repair shop when we have car trouble. Since few of us fully understand how cars work, we generally need to rely on the repair shop to give us accurate information and make the repairs correctly. So, how can you protect yourself?

- 1) Ask friends and neighbors for the names of repair shops they've used and liked. Check out their complaint histories with the Office of Consumer Affairs;
- 2) Try the repair shop(s) out before you need a major repair. Have the shop change your oil or rotate your tires to see how it treats you and other customers. Find out if its mechanics are ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certified;
- 3) When you need a repair, ask for a written estimate if one is not offered. The repair shop's final price cannot exceed the estimate by more than 10%. The shop cannot perform work that is not listed on the estimate unless you authorize it later. Request that replaced parts are returned to you as an indicator that the work was actually done.
- 4) For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs at 410-313-6420, [consumer@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:consumer@howardcountymd.gov) or visit us on the web at: [www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer) .

**Find these and other tips from the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs at [www.howardcountymd.gov/factsheets.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/factsheets.htm) or call 410-313-6420.**